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BEYOND THE ROMAN FRONTIER
Roman Influences on the Northern
Barbaricum

EDITED BY
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Southern Scandinavian *Foederati* and *Auxilarii*?

by THOMAS GRANE

Over the years, various archaeological remains have led scholars to speculate on possible military connections between southern Scandinavia and the northern region of the Roman Empire. This paper attempts to clarify how this material can be interpreted as such. The evidence for this reinterpretation is admittedly not decisive, but the indications derived are believed to be comparable in strength with other views. Obviously, there are few markers that signal “Roman military” in the material. Rather, it is the context of the examined material that is decisive. The individual objects that are crucial to a given interpretation differ greatly depending on the date and circumstances of the find. As long as confirmed knowledge of these matters is scarce, as is the case here, archaeologists and historians must attempt to challenge the traditional theories and break out of self-reaffirming approaches. Hopefully, the current attempt can provoke new ideas and generate alternative interpretations.

Two groups of material will be presented. One group, labelled *foederati*, consists of a number of graves from Denmark spread out both geographically and chronologically. These are graves of individuals representing diplomatic contacts, through which the Romans sought allies in the far reaches of *Germania*. Another military contact was formed by individual Germanic warriors, who were employed as *Auxilarii* in the Roman army. That is the name of the second group, which consists of finds from the *castella* at Zugmantel and Saalburg in the Taunus Mountains. These finds are indications of a Scandinavian presence on the *limes*. Here

a high percentage of Germanic *fibulae* and ceramics indicate that a Germanic population was closely integrated among the occupants of the *castella* and *vici* in certain periods.

Before I further describe the indications of possible Roman contact with the southern Scandinavian warriors, I will give an outline of the nature of Roman diplomatic contacts in general.

ROMAN DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS AND THE USE OF FOREIGN MILITARY RESOURCES

That the Romans had diplomatic contacts with peoples outside the Empire is well known and attested in the literary sources. At the beginning of the Principate, the primary strategy concerning the northern regions was one of military advancement, at first the conquest of *Germania* between the rivers Rhine and Elbe. In AD 9, the Cheruscan prince Arminius put a halt to such plans following his defeat of Varus and his three legions. From thereon, the strategy shifted to one primarily of diplomacy. Why defeat the Germanic tribes at high cost, if they could be controlled by treaties? This strategy, of course, had been used by the Romans in the Republican period as well. For instance, Ariovistus, whom Caesar defeated at the beginning of the Gallic war, had been acknowledged as *rex atque amicus*, i.e., king and friend of the Roman Senate and people, during Caesar’s consulship of 59 BC.¹ The system of client kings consisted of providing pro-Roman tribal leaders with the

1. Caesar *Bell. Gall.* 1.35.2.

means to hold on to power, or to start with, to create pro-Roman chieftains. One of the most obvious examples from the early Principate was the kingdom of the *Marcomanni*. The Marcomannic prince, Maroboduus, had been educated in Rome and had received Roman citizenship and equestrian rank. Upon returning from Roman service, he forged a kingdom with his tribe, the *Marcomanni*, ruling over neighbouring Suebian tribes as well, but alarming the Romans at the same time. In AD 6, Tiberius was about to embark on the conquest of this Marcomannic kingdom, the only part of *Germania* left unconquered according to Velleius Paterculus. When a revolt broke out in Pannonia, a treaty had to be made in haste with Maroboduus. This arrangement must have been so much to Maroboduus' advantage that it kept him from joining Arminius against the Romans. Eventually Maroboduus was overthrown by Catualda and was exiled by Tiberius in Ravenna, where he lived for 18 years. Catualda soon suffered the same fate, and he too was settled on Roman soil at *Forum Iulii* (Fréjus). This indicates that whatever agreements existed between the Romans and Maroboduus in some form must have continued under Catualda. The following power vacuum was used by the Romans, who installed a new king, Vannius of the *Quadi*. His rule lasted for 30 years perhaps constituting what some have labelled the first real Roman client state in the north.² This is supported by Tacitus, who says about the Marcomannic royalty: '*sed vis et potentia regibus ex auctoritate Romana: raro armis nostris, saepius pecunia iuvantur, nec minus valent*' [i.e., but the power and strength of the kings comes through Roman influence: rarely by our arms, more often they are supported by money, which is no less effective].³ In the critical years after Nero's death, this kingdom partly supplied Vespasian with troops, while protecting the Roman borders, as Vespasian had withdrawn the legions stationed on the Danube.⁴

The purpose of the client king was manifold. An immediate advantage to the Romans would be that no military resources were tied down by a conquest. A strong argument for participating in such an arrangement would be the threat of Roman military involvement, an argument the Roman commander Cerealis used when he negotiated peace with the *Bructeri* at the end of the Batavian revolt in AD 70.⁵ The Romans would obtain a friendly neighbour, who would protect the Roman border and sometimes hinder other tribes from attacking the Empire. They might also provide resources in the form of auxiliaries or grain. The king on the other hand would receive Roman support for instance in financial or agricultural form. Tribes would seek support or protection against others.

These provisions given by the Romans, often referred to as subsidies or gifts, were not necessarily always given to client kings, whom one could describe as the strongest type of Roman diplomatic contacts, but could also prove useful on an *ad hoc* basis.⁶ Another way of creating barbarian auxiliaries was through peace treaties. One such example comes from the Marcomannic wars. In AD 174, Marcus Aurelius reached a peace agreement with the *Iazygii*/Sarmatians, with the outcome that the Sarmatians supplied 8,000 horsemen, of which 5,500 were sent to *Britannia*. When Commodus ended the war in AD 180, the *Quadi* had to deliver 13,000 men and the *Marcomanni* a little less as auxiliary troops.⁷ Little is known of how these men were used. Practically no auxiliary units were named after Germanic tribes living outside the Empire.⁸ Tacitus mentions such a unit. In the "*Agricola*", he describes how a '*cohors Usiporum per Germania conscripta et in Britanniam transmissa*' [i.e., a Usipan cohort raised in *Germania* (one presumes, among the *Usipi*, who lived near the Rhine in the area between the rivers Sieg and Lahn) and sent to *Britannia*, deserted and captured three Liburnian galleys].

2. Tacitus *Annales* 2.63, 12.29; Vell. Pat.: 2.108-10; Austin & Rankov 1995, 24-25, 121-122; Goetz & Welwei 1995, 126, n. 74; Southern 2001, 188-190; Wolters 1990, 40-41.

3. Tacitus *Germania* 42.2. All translations are by the author.

4. Tacitus *Historiae* 3.5.1, 3.21.2.

5. Tacitus *Historiae* 5.24.

6. Tacitus *Germania* 42.2; Austin & Rankov 1995, 147-149; Braund 1989, 17-20; Mattern 1999, 118, 121, 179-181; Southern 2001, 192-195; Wolters 1990, 35-7; 1991, 116-121.

7. Cassius Dio 71.16.2, 72.2.3.

8. James 2005, 274; Spaul 2000, 10-16.

This they did after '*occiso centurione ac militibus, qui ad tradendam disciplinam immixti manipulis exemplum et rectores habebantur...*' [i.e., slaying the centurion and those legionary soldiers, who had been mixed with the maniples to serve as models and instructors to teach discipline].⁹ The word *cohors* in this context must be the designation simply of a unit, rather than the usual tactical six-century unit. Tacitus also uses *manipulus* for this purpose, a designation for two *centuriae* used in the Republican army. It seems these *Usipi* had gone to some sort of training camp as recruits, where they could learn the basics of being a *miles Auxiliarius*, forming a unit led by one centurion with legionary soldiers as instructors. Possibly they would have been dispatched from this camp to different units as reinforcements. That individuals did serve is attested by the epigraphic evidence mentioning, for instance, a horseman of the *Chatti* from the *ala I Pannonicorum* or one of the *Frisii* from the *ala Hispanorum Aureliana*.¹⁰ These and other examples are listed by R. Wolters, who also mentions inscriptions with the name "GERMANVS". Such a person could come from anywhere within Roman or non-Roman *Germania*.¹¹

Another form of diplomatic contact occurred with the arrival of embassies from different tribes, asking for the friendship of the Roman Emperor and people. Probably the best known reference to this is the *Res Gestae* of Augustus, listing a great number of peoples, from the *Cimbri* to the Indians, who sought friendship.¹² But not all cross-frontier interactions had to go all the way to the Emperor. Yearly subsidies would be handled by the nearest financial procurator, and kings and local chieftains could establish relationships with the provincial governors. From information gained by the work of Flavius Arrianus during his time as governor of Cappadocia between AD 131-137, it is clear that such a position demanded a thorough knowledge of cities, military installations and armies of the

province as well as of neighbouring tribes and their attitudes towards the Empire. This source however is the only one providing details of a governor's knowledge of his province. Probably envoys from the various tribes that had dealings with the province would pay a visit when a new governor had arrived, in order to confirm treaties and other arrangements. In the early principate, at least, it seems the governor was free to venture on military expeditions, if he thought it necessary, for instance in *Britannia* or *Germania*.¹³

Roman diplomatic relations in the long run would have been the Emperor's responsibility. He would receive tribal embassies. On the other hand, the day-to-day administration of such matters would have been left to the local authorities. Most likely this would have been routine matters handled by the offices of the governor and financial procurator. But little information about the practical matters has survived until today. The contact with individual smaller chieftains or bands of warriors would have been the concern of the governor.

FOEDERATI

The matter of Scandinavian tribes and warriors forming alliances with the Romans is not addressed easily. The literary sources have left us nothing substantial to work with, but there are some archaeological indications that such relations might have existed, although such is the nature of the evidence upon which a number of hypotheses concerning the archaeological material can be made.

The following paragraphs concentrate on certain grave finds as indications of military-political connections between the Germanic nobility and the Romans. As a case study, material from a selection of ten graves will be presented. The Hoby and Hedegård A 4103 graves are dated to the beginning of the 1st century AD,

9. Tacitus *Agricola* 28.1. To the location of the tribe in *Germania*: Tacitus *Germania* 32.

10. CIL III 4228; CIL VI 4342.

11. Wolters 1991, 114-115.

12. Augustus *Res Gestae* 26, 31.

13. Arrian *Periplus*; Tacitus *Agricola* 14; *Annales* 11.18-20, 13.53, 14.29; Austin & Rankov 1995, 142-147; Mattern 1999, 10-11; Millar 1982, 7-10, 15-16; Southern 2001, 194-195.

while Juellinge grave 4 is from the turn of the 1st century AD. Brokær grave 1878 and Himlingøje graves 1875-10 and 1980-25 are from the middle and/or second half of the 2nd century AD. Himlingøje graves 1828 and 1978-1 and Hågerup on Funen are from the first half of the 3rd century AD. The last grave, Varpelev grave *a*, is from the end of the 3rd or the beginning of the 4th century AD (Fig. 1). These 10 graves are chosen as case studies because of their chronological and geographical diversity. They are also chosen for the diversity in archaeological remains that function as markers of the diplomatic contacts.



Fig. 1. Map of sites with graves mentioned in the text. 1: Hoby. 2: Hedegård. 3: Juellinge. 4: Brokær. 5-8: Himlingøje. 9: Hågerup. 10: Varpelev.

THE PRINCELY GRAVE FROM HOBY ON LOLLAND

The Hoby grave is dated to the period B1a, which is the time from the birth of Christ to AD 40. This is the beginning of the Early Roman Iron Age, when Roman items began to

appear more regularly in Germanic graves. Most of the items belonged to the banquet and drinking sphere. In the Hoby grave, a c. 30-year-old man had been laid to rest richly furnished with gifts of gold, silver and bronze, as well as an almost intact Roman banquet set of eight pieces (Pl. II). Apart from the Roman objects, there were among other things a belt buckle, two drinking horn fittings, five silver *fibulae*, of which two were animal head *fibulae*, and two gold finger rings. The Roman objects consisted of five pieces of bronze: a platter, a *trulla* or cooking pan, a jug, a tray and a *situla*, and three cups of silver (one small and a larger pair). The two larger cups, as mentioned above, are works of the finest Augustan craftsmanship (Pl. I). They are ornamented with scenes from the Iliad made in relief, and both have a maker's inscription, *Chirisophos epoi*, and weight specifications. On the bottom the name *Silius* is incised (Pl. III). This name is believed to be that of the former owner.¹⁴ It is a name that is known to us through Tacitus.¹⁵ Caius Silius was the commander of the Upper Rhine army from AD 14-21, and as such participated in the campaigns led by Germanicus in AD 14-16.¹⁶

Several factors make this grave interesting, such as the inscription naming a high ranking Roman officer; the richness by far exceeding any other contemporary find, and the fact that the banquet set was almost complete. There would have been three different ways for the items to reach Lolland: as trade, booty or gifts. At this early stage, trade seems the most unlikely. Two things speak against this. As regular trade objects, it seems probable that the assemblage would have been broken up. Furthermore, it is improbable that the property of a wealthy Roman, be it the one we know of or someone else, would appear as a trade object. A suggestion that this happened after the fall and suicide of Silius in AD 24 does not appear realistic.¹⁷ The Hoby prince could have acquired the set as booty, had he fought with the *Cherusci* against the Romans. However, to have had the

14. Friis Johansen 1923, 119-165; Jensen 2003, 317; Lund Hansen 1987, 403.

15. Tacitus *Annales* 1.31.2.

16. Eck 1985, 3-6.

17. Tacitus *Annales* 4.18-20; Andersson & Herschend 1997, 13-14.

luck not only to get near the headquarters of the commander of four legions and auxiliaries and indeed to raid it, somehow does not seem realistic either. The last and most probable possibility is that Silius gave the banquet set as a diplomatic gift, forming an alliance with a Germanic prince, who could be of use to the Romans either during the campaigns or simply as an ally behind the enemy.¹⁸

An additional sign of contact between Hoby and the Roman Empire is an earlier grave dated to the transition from the Celtic to the Roman Iron Age, around the time of the birth of Christ.¹⁹ Here a Roman bronze vessel constituted a cremation urn, containing remains of an imported La Tène sword scabbard, which also points to contacts with the south. Perhaps this grave belonged to the father of the Hoby prince.

The two animal head *fibulae* have been linked to a princely grave in Jutland. In 1981, K. Kristiansen and L. Hedeager, in an examination of a grave from Bendstrup in eastern Jutland, suggested that there had been a connection between Hoby and Bendstrup.²⁰ The Bendstrup grave contained the remains of what were interpreted to be the feet of a large wine container, a *kratér*.²¹ Furthermore, two silver animal head *fibulae*, probably of a Roman origin resembling those from Hoby, were found.²² The distribution of this *fibula* type indicates two concentrations, one in the area between the Adriatic Sea and the Danube, with a few sporadic finds in Böhmen and Mähren, and one in Denmark, consisting of a total of eight graves. Whereas the southern group consists of *fibulae* of southern origin from the beginning of the 1st century AD, the Danish group originate a little later and are all made locally, except the pair from Bendstrup, which belongs to the southern group. This could be an indication of closer relations, perhaps of an exogamous kind.²³ Interestingly, L. Bender Jørgensen has described

how half of the early finds of Z/S spun twills, Bender Jørgensen's Virring type, were found in graves with animal head *fibulae*. This type is widely found within the Roman Empire.²⁴

HEDEGÅRD GRAVE A 4103 FROM EASTERN JUTLAND

The gifts in this cremation grave were by far as valuable as those of the Hoby grave were. However, apart from some pottery and bronze items, two lance heads and one Roman bronze platter, it was furnished with a highly unusual gift, a *pugio* (Pl. IV).²⁵ This kind of Roman military dagger was used in the first half of the 1st century AD. Based on the pattern of the ornamented sheath, this particular *pugio* belongs to the Dunaföldvár type, which was the earliest type. Only two other *pugiones* have been found outside the Roman Empire. One is from Ilischken near Kaliningrad and the other is from Ocnita in Romania, both part of what the Romans called *Scythia*.²⁶ Unlike, for instance, the Roman sword, which is often found in Germanic contexts, the *pugio* was closely and singularly connected to the Roman military. That the Hedegård dagger is the only one found in a Germanic context indicates that Germanic warriors could find little use for *pugiones*, coming across them, as they would have, when Roman troops occasionally lost them. That also contradicts a scenario in which the *pugio* was handled as a trade object. Following this line of thought, the presence of this *pugio* in a grave indicates a connection between the deceased and the Roman army. If we should dare to connect this dagger to historically known events, its owner might have served under Tiberius as an *Auxiliarius*. As such, he could have participated in the naval expedition in AD 5 to the Cimbrian Promontory, having knowledge of otherwise unknown territory. As at Hoby, there are earlier links to the Romans at Hedegård. Three graves

18. See, e.g., Künzl 1988, 36-38; Wolters 1991, 123, who states this as a matter of fact.

19. Müller 1900, 148-153.

20. Hedeager & Kristiansen 1981, 133-138.

21. Lund Hansen 1987, 407.

22. Hedeager & Kristiansen 1981, 94-103.

23. Hedeager & Kristiansen 1981, 133-138; Jensen 2003, 293-294, 316-317.

24. Bender Jørgensen 1986, 346-347.

25. Madsen 1999, 74-83.

26. Madsen 1999, 74-83; Nowakowski 1983, 80, 106; Thiel & Zanier 1994, nr. 138; Watt 2003, 185-186, fig. 6.

from the end of the 1st century BC contained high quality Roman bronze vessels.²⁷

JUELLINGE GRAVE 4 ON LOLLAND

This woman's grave belongs to a larger group of richly furnished graves from the period AD 70-150.²⁸ The grave gifts consisted of a large number of gold, silver, bronze, glass and bone objects. Six Roman vessels had been deposited, four of bronze and two of glass. As such, this grave is not much different from the rest of the group, if it were not for the type of glass vessels. A glance at a distribution map for this type of ribbed glass bowl shows that, outside the Roman Empire, it is found at very few places (Fig. 2). Outside the Empire, this type is found just on the other side of the Rhine opposite Cologne and on the coast of the Black Sea, apart from at Juellinge. There are several possible explanations for this. Either it is pure coincidence that other examples have not been found, something we can do very little with, or it is a result of a direct contact between the Romans and a princely family on Lolland. Another indication of direct contact is the fact that the bowls comprise a set.²⁹

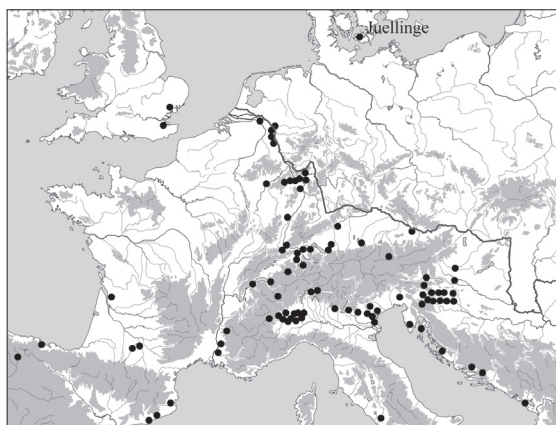


Fig. 2. Distribution map of ribbed glass bowl from Juellinge grave 4 (from Jensen 2003, 357).

BROKÆR GRAVE 1878

This cremation grave, dated to the beginning of the second half of the 2nd century AD, was very poorly preserved, but enough was left to identify the grave gifts in what is one of the richest graves from Iron Age Denmark.³⁰ It included a ring-pommel sword, a chain mail, spurs, a gold finger ring, two ornamented silver beakers, two drinking horns and eight or nine Roman bronze vessels, one of silver. The ring-pommel sword, originally a Sarmatian type of cavalry sword, was copied by the Romans and used for a similar purpose from the middle of the 2nd century AD to the beginning of the 3rd century.³¹ The sword from Brokær was believed by M. Biborski to be a Germanic copy, as it lacked the obligatory rivet hole.³² However, X-ray pictures later showed otherwise.³³ Only c. 25 ring-pommel swords have been found outside the Roman Empire. Apart from the remains of four or five swords from the war booty sacrifice in the Vimose bog on Fyn, those found in a Germanic



Fig. 3. Distribution map of ring-pommel swords found in graves in the western part of the northern Barbaricum. B: Brokær (from Biborski 1994 & Rasmussen 1995).

27. Madsen 1999, 63-74.

28. Jensen 2003, 356-358; Lund Hansen 1987, 194 fig. 130, 403; Müller 1911, 17-30.

29. Lund Hansen 1987, 222.

30. Rasmussen 1995, 58-80.

31. Hundt 1955, 51-52; Rasmussen 1995, 71.

32. Biborski 1994, 90.

33. Rasmussen 1995, 72, fig. 7a.

34. Ørsnes 1970, XX-XXI; Pauli Jensen 2003, 228; Raddatz 1961, 26-44. Only five ring-pommels can be accounted for at present.

context are mostly from graves, as either single or closed grave finds (Fig. 3).³⁴ The graves are all concentrated in the Elbe area, except for the example from Brokær. K. Raddatz interprets the ring-pommel swords from these graves as booty from the Marcomannic wars during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (AD 161-180).³⁵ But when we look at the grave contexts, significant differences are apparent between the Elbe graves and Brokær (Fig. 4). In the Elbe graves, the main feature is the weaponry, with a sword, shield and either lance or spear, if not both, indicating the warrior status of the deceased. Apart from a gold finger ring here and a fibula there, no other status markers are present. These are not rich graves. In Brokær 1878, on the contrary, while there is only a sword, there is in addition a chain mail. In about half the graves, spurs indicate a horse-

man. The most apparent difference is the complete lack of Roman imports in the Elbe graves. Thus, the Brokær grave is unique, being the only example where the sword is combined with Roman imports. Raddatz suggests that the weaponry and imports reached the Germanic area by different means. B. Rasmussen believes that Brokær could be seen in the light of both war booty and trade. The environment of Brokær was perfect for raising cattle and it was situated at the mouth of a major west-east trade route, the River Kongeåen at the north end of the Wadden Sea. It is not unthinkable that the locals traded hides or perhaps even live cattle with the Romans.³⁶ Only a few hundred kilometres south of Brokær, at Tolsum in the northwestern corner of the Netherlands, in the province of Friesland, a writing tablet with a trade contract was discovered. The contract concerned the sale of oxen by a local Friesian farmer to a group of Roman soldiers on the 9th of September AD 116.³⁷ Trading connections could also indicate relations opposite to those of the Elbe warriors. The Brokær prince could have been a Roman ally, who also prospered economically through this relation. Like Hedegård, some graves dated to the preceding period hold Roman bronze vessels.³⁸

	Hamfelde 302	Hamfelde 403	Hamfelde 665	Hohenferchensar	Malente-Krummsee 79	Brokær 1878	Kemnitz 455	Hamfelde 277	Kemnitz 430	Kemnitz 508
Ring-pommel sword	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Lance	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x
Spear (javelin)	x		x	x	x					
Shield	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	
Chain mail						x				
Spurs	x	x		x		x				
Strap fitting/buckle	x	x	x	x		x				
Scissors	x	x	?	x	x	x			x	
Knife	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x
Pottery	x	x		x			x			
Comb				x		x				
Awl					x	?				
Needle	x					x				
Whetstone				x						
Fibula			x							
Gold finger ring				x		x				
Drinking horn		x				x				
Silver beakers						x				
Roman Import						x				

Fig. 4. Grave contents of graves with ring-pommel swords (from Rasmussen 1995, 85).

THE HIMLINGØJE CEMETERY

The cemetery at Himlingøje on Zealand dated from the middle of the 2nd to the end of the 3rd century AD represents the earliest of the Germanic power centres from the Late Roman Iron Age. This centre had strong connections to the Romans, as the distribution pattern of Roman tableware in Scandinavia highly indicates that it was funnelled through Himlingøje.³⁹

The first generation of graves from the Himlingøje cemetery consisted of cremations. They were highly visibly marked by five huge barrows. One barrow was empty, possibly being a cenotaph, while another had been ploughed over. A C¹⁴ date from the cenotaph barrow plac-

35. Raddatz 1961, 41, 54-55.

36. Raddatz 1961, 40-41; Rasmussen 1995, 84-85, 98.

37. Boeles 1951, 129-130, pl. XVI; Vollgraff 1917, 341-352.

38. Rasmussen 1995, 42-56.

39. Lund Hansen 1987, 200-215.

40. Lund Hansen *et al.* 1995, 110-123, 129-130, 192-194.

es it in the period AD 140-320.⁴⁰ Two barrows contained richly furnished cremations from the second half of the 2nd century AD (Grave 1875-10 from B2/C1a and grave 1980-25 from C1a).

Grave 1875-10 (Baghøjene sb. 15)

In 1875, S. Müller excavated the first of the Himlingøje barrows. He found a cremated adult aged between 30 and 50 years old. The remains of the deceased had been deposited in a *trulla* or cooking pan along with a great number of goods mostly of bronze that had been severely damaged by fire (Fig. 5). Some fragments had been deliberately bent. Parts of three bronze knob spurs indicate that the deceased was a man. The *trulla* used as an urn had a fabrication mark, 'PICVS' or 'RICVS'. Among the remains there were bronze fragments of two sets of ladles and sieves, a bucket with face attaches, a larger vessel, probably an Östland cauldron and feet from bronze vessels. Furthermore, the spiral and needle of a *fibula* and a small bronze fragment may have been part of a Germanic swastika *fibula*. Sixteen pieces of gold sheet with signs of an earlier attachment to bronze may have belonged to this *fibula* as well. There were remains of one glass vessel. Two pieces of silver presumably once were a couple of silver beakers.⁴¹

Grave 1980-25

This grave was discovered during excavations in 1980. The urn, a *terra sigillata* bowl, had

been placed in an undecorated, locally made pottery bowl (Fig. 6). The urn was filled with bones and remains of grave goods damaged by fire. From the anthropological material it was determined that the remains belonged to someone between 18 and 25 years. The gender was not possible to determine based on the bones, but the archaeological remains indicated a male, as one group of grave goods was *militaria*. A lance head and fragments of two belt fittings were of iron. The bronze findings included fragments of knob spurs, two different sizes of shield edge fittings and a disc originally ornamented with six rosettes, which has been interpreted as a baldric disc. The grave had also been richly furnished with Roman tableware. Bronze fragments remained of a ladle and sieve (probably), an unidentifiable vessel, one or more fluted vessels as well as different handles. Furthermore, there were fragments of at least three different glasses, one of which was most likely a circus cup based on the remains of colouring. The only complete Roman vessel was the urn, a *terra sigillata* bowl, Dragendorf 37. It had been produced in Lezoux and was made by Secundus in the workshop of Cinnamus. On the top of the urn lay 29 pieces of gold sheet.⁴²

The two early Himlingøje graves are much alike, the last resting places of high ranking warriors. Their status is quite evident from the presence of gold, silver and a great number of Roman



Fig. 5. Himlingøje, grave 1875-10. Trulla used as urn (photo: The National Museum of Denmark/Lennart Larsen).



Fig. 6. Himlingøje, grave 1980-25. *Terra sigillata* bowl used as urn (photo: The National Museum of Denmark/John Lee).

41. Engelhardt 1877, 390-393; Lund Hansen 1987, 412; Lund Hansen *et al.* 1995, 120-123, 146-147, 250-251, pls. 8-10.

42. Lund Hansen 1987, 413; Lund Hansen *et al.* 1995, 118-119, 165-166, 251, pls. 31-33.

vessels. Based only on their military equipment they would only reach the middle class, as determined by Ilkjær and Carnap-Bornheim.⁴³ They also are both included in the present examination because of the relevance of their graves, in particular the urns. In one case it was a large cooking pan (E 142, Dm, 22 cm); in the other it was a *terra sigillata* bowl. When the vessels to be used as urns were selected, they would not just have been the nearest suitable vessels, but would have been chosen deliberately.

Let us consider the *trulla* first. It was clear from the excavation that it had been stuffed with grave goods in such a way that parts of these objects had to be folded and pressed together in order to make room for everything. Size wise, the Östland cauldron or the bucket with face attaches would have been better choices, as would the latter if grandeur was the intention. Obviously neither was the case. I would postulate that the reason the *trulla* was chosen was because it could have had special meaning to the deceased. *Trullae* are found all over *Barbaricum*, and it is not in itself spectacular.⁴⁴ This vessel was also a common tool used by the Roman army, at least in the 1st century AD according to M. Bishop and J. Coulston. What happens in the 2nd and 3rd century they do not reveal, unfortunately.⁴⁵ Considering that this is one of the tombs that constitute the beginning of an influential and wealthy family in eastern Zealand, who had connections to the Roman Empire, the use of the *trulla* could in this case signify an affiliation of the deceased not just to army life, but to Roman army life. Furthermore, it would indicate the importance to the society of his military status. In a richly furnished inhumation grave from Marwedel in Niedersachsen, a *trulla* (E 142-4) was found among many other objects. In a reconstruction by F. Leux, this object had been placed over the belly of the deceased, while four other Roman bronzes had been placed above his head.⁴⁶ Could this special position indicate that the *trulla* had held some specific meaning to the deceased here as well?

A comparable situation can be deduced from grave 1980-25. The reason a *terra sigillata* bowl was used could very well have been that this bowl had meant something personal to the deceased. It is clear from the distribution of *terra sigillata* throughout *Barbaricum* that it was not a luxury commodity. The distribution pattern shows that this pottery was connected to regular trade and use. The areas involved are mostly situated within a 200 km distance to the Roman frontier, more or less corresponding with the regions between the Rhine and the Elbe. An exception to this is the Vistula regions.⁴⁷ Obviously, this does not include Scandinavia. In Denmark, very few *terra sigillata* vessels have been found and they are not part of the status bearing vessels of Roman origin that otherwise occur in great numbers in the Germanic elite graves. Nevertheless, this young man was laid to rest in one. Therefore, I believe that this vessel could have had personal significance or symbolic value to the deceased, and the most obvious place for him to acquire it, was in Roman surroundings. Again, this is supported by the social significance of these graves.

Grave 1828

This and the following grave are dated to the first half of the 3rd century AD. When the grave complex was discovered in 1828, some of the first finds to appear were two silver beakers with gilt ornamental bands (Pl. V).⁴⁸ Other grave gifts were Roman tableware of bronze and glass and spectacular Germanic gold arm- and finger rings. The ornaments on the bands consist of various animals as well as human figures holding ring-pommel swords. The choice of elements could indicate a hunting scene, but as the sword is not a hunting weapon that does not seem likely. Furthermore, a close look at the animals depicted rather would suggest they are domesticated and not wild. One proposal is that the scenes represent warriors at rest looking at and pondering over their worldly riches, among them perhaps chickens, a Roman innovation.⁴⁹

43. Carnap-Bornheim & Ilkjær 1996, 483-484.

44. Eggers 1951: pl. 42; Lund Hansen 1987, 48-49, 59.

45. Bishop & Coulston 2006, 119; Kunow 1983, 75.

46. Leux 1992, 319 fig. 3.B, 322.

47. Berke 1990, 102-109, Beilage 2; Erdrich & Voß 2003, 148-149.

48. Lund Hansen *et al.* 1995, 141-143.

49. Brandt 2005, 12-13.

Like the Brokær sword, the ring-pommel sword motif on the beakers has been connected to the Marcomannic wars.⁵⁰ Given the status value of these beakers and the strong link between Himlingøje and the Romans starting at the time of these wars, the motif very well could indicate ancestral participation on the Roman side that had entered the local myth.

Grave 1978-1 (1978-35)

Grave 1978-1 is another richly furnished grave, but in this case the gifts, of which there are plenty of gold, silver and glass, are not of particular interest. What makes this grave special is the skeletal material, both human and animal. The deceased, a male aged 18-25, had been carved up prior to inhumation. At the time of burial, an attempt to position the bones correctly in the grave had failed, as some larger bones had been placed upside down and inside out, though at the right location, while some smaller bones had just been put in the grave near the body (Fig. 7). Several bones had been deposited in a manner that showed that not all parts had been completely skeletonised, though. The only pathological trace was a fractured rib on the right side of the chest.⁵¹ With the deceased was his dog, of which an almost complete skeleton remained. It was found outside and on top of the grave, where the find of dog excrement indicates that it was alive at the funeral. It was a large, rather old dog, probably of either the Maremma or Komondor type.⁵² The Komondor, a Hungarian sheep dog, came to Europe from China sometime in the 10th century AD, while the Maremma, an Italian sheepdog, dates back to the birth of Christ.⁵³ With the date of the type secure, it is more likely to have been a Maremma type. Considering the status of the grave, the central grave of three in one mound, and the age of the deceased, he must have been a relation of the ruler, perhaps a son or nephew. One reason for carving him up could be to facilitate transport of the body in order to bring it home for

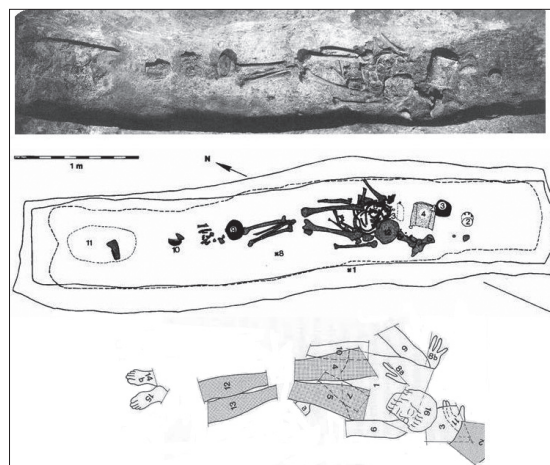


Fig. 7. Himlingøje grave, 1978-1. Position of the bones of the buried male (from Lund Hansen 1995, 127, 256).

proper burial at the family grave site, suggesting he died abroad! Considering his injury, he might have fallen from his horse and died from an inflammation. Where he had been is of course impossible to know, but not impossible to guess at. Without calculating the time for a body to decay combined with possible daily travel distances by land or sea under various seasonal influences, it should suffice to conclude that he must have been so far away that it was easier to bring him home in pieces, but not so far that he had time to decompose completely. One possibility is that he had been somewhere at the *limes*. Could he have been serving as a Roman officer, or was he perhaps functioning as an envoy on a trip to *Colonia Agrippinensis* for his family? Apart from the overall relations between the Himlingøje family and the Romans, the link in this particular grave is the old Italian sheepdog.⁵⁴ Perhaps it was a gift to the prince, when he was a boy.

HÅGERUP

In 1932, the inhumation grave of an adult male was found at Hågerup on Funen. The grave was

50. Lund Hansen *et al.* 1995, 386-387; Storgaard 2001, 102-103.

51. Lund Hansen *et al.* 1995, 126-128, 162-164, 254-256, 273-274.

52. Hatting 1978, 69-74; Jørgensen *et al.* 2003, 394; Lund Hansen *et al.* 1995, 128.

53. www.komondor.org/html/history.html; www.maremma-no.com/history.htm.

54. Storgaard 2001, 100.

richly equipped with Roman objects, and not only vessels, of which there were two Östland cauldrons, a ladle and sieve set, a glass cup and a silver bowl (Fig. 8). Furthermore, there were a silver spoon of the *cochlear* type and a gold finger ring with a blue gem, in which was carved the image of *Bonus Eventus*, Good Fortune (Pl. VI). In his mouth, the deceased had a *denarius* from AD 137. Local goods included various toiletries of silver and bone, silver belt terminals and a piece of gold string coiled up in a spiral as well as pottery.⁵⁵



Fig. 8. Hågerup. Silver bowl (photo: The National Museum of Denmark/John Lee).

Three items, the spoon, the silver bowl and the signet ring, appear in Hågerup for the first time in a Danish grave. Spoons are only found in two other graves in Scandinavia, Årslev on Funen and Tuna in middle Sweden. Both are dated to C2. Spoons are also present in a number of early C2 graves from the middle Elbe region. Lund Hansen has interpreted the spoons as evidence of contact within the Germanic elite.⁵⁶ According to S. Künzl, the spoons indicate knowledge of Roman dining customs, at least when a set is found.⁵⁷ Although two spoons were found in Tuna grave X, they are both *cochleares*, why they do not form a set.⁵⁸ On Funen, there is a set only

by combining Hågerup and Årslev. Nevertheless, the question is whether the spoons reflect contact with the Romans rather than with other Germanic princely seats.

The silver bowl from Hågerup is the only Roman drinking vessel of silver from the Late Roman Iron Age in Scandinavia apart from the silver/glass vessel from Varpelev. However, there are two close parallels in Leuna graves 1917, 2 and 1926, 3.⁵⁹ Incidentally, all three graves contain remains of a glass bowl of a more or less similar shape.⁶⁰ Parallels to the silver bowls are found in the Roman provinces of *Germania Inferior* and *Belgica*. One was found in a grave from the cemetery of the villa of the Secundinii at Rheinbach-Flerzheim near Bonn. That grave was dated to the end of the 3rd century AD.⁶¹ Another came from a 3rd century grave from Bavai.⁶² Only the Hågerup bowl pre-dates C2.

The signet ring is one of only nine Roman rings out of 35 from Scandinavia that are found in a context. These include seven out of 22 rings from Denmark and two out of five rings from Norway. None of the seven Roman rings from Sweden has any context.⁶³ Once again the other rings are dated to C2 or later. The Hågerup ring is unique in Scandinavia, while 28 of the other rings are variations of the same type.⁶⁴ How does this ring relate to the Romans in particular? K. Andersson has suggested that they may have functioned as Roman *dona*, gifts to Germanic chieftains from Romans.⁶⁵ Gold rings in the Roman society were originally reserved for the *nobiles* and *equites Romani*, members of the senatorial and the equestrian order. During the Principate their use was widened to include all with Roman citizenship.⁶⁶ The gift of a ring from a Roman commander to a Germanic prince could be a reflection of the patron-client relationship.⁶⁷ For instance, the work of L. Al-lason-Jones in the Sudan has shown that rings

55. Albrectsen 1968, 123; Broholm 1952, 16-24; Lund Hansen 1987, 426.

56. Lund Hansen 1987, 224-225.

57. Künzl 2002c, 355-356.

58. Nylén & Schönback 1994, 28-29.

59. Schulz 1953, 62, pls. V.1 & XXV.1.

60. Broholm 1952, 22; Schultz 1953, 61, pls. V.2 & XXV.2.

61. Baratte 1993, 22, pl. IV, fig. 7; Gechter 1986, 17; Menninger 1997, 99, figs. 18-20.

62. Baratte 1993, 21, pl. IV, fig. 6.

63. Andersson 1985, 108-111; Andersson 1987, 147; Lund Hansen 1987, 228-229.

64. Beckmann 1969, 35-36, 39, pls. 11.17b, 13.22a (the Hågerup ring).

65. Andersson 1985, 139.

66. Andersson 1985, 138; Hurschmann 2001, 1021.

67. Andersson 1985, 139.

could have been given as diplomatic gifts to the leaders of Rome's neighbours.⁶⁸ Perhaps it could even have been a token of the granting of Roman citizenship. We know of several Germanic leaders who were bestowed not only citizenship, but also a membership of the equestrian order.⁶⁹ That the Emperor Constantine gave away gold finger rings to loyal Barbarians was reported by the Byzantine emperor, Konstantinos Porphyrogenitos († AD 959)⁷⁰ Although the significance of the ring might have changed once it entered *Barbaricum*, I find it very likely that whoever gave it away, would have done so in concordance with his own belief that the ring symbolised either a personal or official friendship. Therefore, I agree with Andersson, who states that to see the Roman rings as indications of direct contact between Romans and Scandinavians does not seem too far fetched.⁷¹

A few comments should be made concerning the *denarius* found in the mouth of the deceased, which was briefly touched on above. As mentioned, this feature has both been interpreted by some to reflect the Graeco-Roman *Obolus* custom and rejected as such.⁷² However, the fact is that in a small number of graves, the bereaved families for some reason chose to place a coin or something similar like a piece of gold or glass in the mouth of the deceased.⁷³ This fact could be used as a counter argument against H. Horsnæs' rejection, which was based on the alteration of some coins into jewellery. If a simple piece of gold or glass could serve the purpose, why not a coin with an eyelet or a hole? In the case of Hågerup, the coin was a *denarius* and not an *aureus*. In addition, it was accompanied by a small piece of coiled gold string. Naturally, we could think up an endless number of reasons for this. One suggestion complies with the *Obolus* custom. It was important to the deceased that it was a coin, but he only had one of silver. As this coin was not deemed valuable enough, and as he did not wish

to enter the Underworld insufficiently funded, the gold was added. From this we might get the impression that, in the belief of this particular deceased and/or his family, the presence of payment in the form of coinage was a must. Nevertheless, something more valuable had to be added, as Charon, or whoever may have been thought to be at the receiving end, would not have been satisfied with one measly *denarius*. In such a scenario, the symbolic value was not enough, contrary to those graves with pieces of glass, which had only symbolic value and no monetary value.⁷⁴ Another more practical suggestion was given by the excavator. He seriously doubted that the deceased would have had any idea whatsoever of the meaning of the *Obolus* custom. Instead he believed that this feature reflected the use in daily life of the mouth as a place to keep valuables, 'as described at several occasions in the literature'. In other words, the mouth of the deceased was used as a purse.⁷⁵ Which literature he is referring to is not specified, but the fact is that the use of a purse hanging from the belt was quite normal at this time, as reflected in the Illerup war booty sacrifice, for instance.⁷⁶

VARPELEV GRAVE A

The Varpelev cemetery was situated only a few kilometres from Himlingøje. Continuity can be seen here, as the cemetery covered most of the 3rd century AD, both C1b and C2. During the excavation by C. Engelhardt in 1876 and 1877, a number of richly furnished inhumation graves belonging to C2 were discovered. The most spectacular of these was grave *a*. The deceased, an adult male based on the anthropological remains, had been given a large amount of jewellery as well as high quality Roman vessels. Perhaps the most spectacular object was a blue glass bowl that had been blown into the

68. L. Allason-Jones, Newcastle: Personal communication.

69. See e.g. chapter on the *Clades Variana* and the end of the *Germania* campaigns.

70. Konstantinos Porphyrogenitos 53.191.

71. Andersson 1985, 137.

72. e.g. Dyhrfeld-Johnsen (in this volume); Horsnæs 2005, 14; Lund Hansen 1987, 178.

73. Dyhrfeld-Johnsen (in this volume); Lund Hansen 1995, 156.

74. Boye 2002, 208-209.

75. Broholm 1952, 18.

76. See the description of coins above.

openwork frame of a silver *kantharos* (Pl. VII). Near the rim, in openwork, was the Greek word 'ΕΥΤΥΧΩC', meaning 'for (your) happiness'. Three other high quality glasses were found and a glass 'pipette'. The only bronze he had was a platter. Also belonging to the banquet sphere were two silver fittings from a drinking horn. By his neck lay a gold arm or neck ring with snake's head terminals and a gold pin. By the right ear was an *aureus* with an eyelet from the reign of Probus (AD 276-282). On his right hand he had two gold finger rings. Furthermore, there were three silver buckles and a strap end fitting of silver (Fig. 9). At a follow-up investigation, two silver fingerings, a square double silver plate and another silver plate were found. He also had 42 gaming pieces of bone and four bear's claws with him. All in all these grave goods make Varpelev grave *a* the richest C2 grave in Denmark.⁷⁷

This grave very much resembles the contemporary rich graves of the Haßleben-Leuna horizon. These graves, it is argued, reflect that Germanic Warriors from the middle Elbe region were hired by the 'Gallic' Emperors of the late 3rd century AD. One of the important aspects was the dominating presence of 'Gal-

lic' *aurei* and the fact that no *aurei* were later than the last 'Gallic' Emperor.⁷⁸ In Varpelev, an *aureus* minted under Probus had been deposited in grave *a*. Furthermore, there were unique objects like the glass and silver cup and the 'pipette'. These objects alone could indicate direct contact, and combined with the *aureus* we might have an indication that diplomatic relations were initiated between the Romans, now ruled by one Emperor, and eastern Zealand. This area had firm relations with the Romans in the first half of the 3rd century AD, but had seen a decline, possibly due to the appearance on the scene of the middle Elbe warriors. It has been suggested that these warriors were sent packing, once the 'Gallic' Empire ceased to exist. The link to Varpelev could indicate an attempt to fill the gap left by the Elbe warriors and a re-establishment of earlier relations between the Romans and eastern Zealand. Two of the buckles, a large and a small, as well as a strap end fitting were found at the waist of the deceased. The last small buckle was located above his head. While the two buckles and the strap end fitting could have belonged to the personal belt and the military belt, as identified by J. Ilkjær, the third buckle is harder to explain.⁷⁹ The military belt buckle and strap end fitting highly resemble late Roman examples from the middle of the 4th century AD, although no exact matches can be found. The set is not as elaborate as is often seen in the 4th century AD, which could indicate that the Varpelev warrior may have been the owner of one of the earliest examples.⁸⁰ The closest parallels are an undecorated piece from grave 2 at Monceau-le-Neuf in northern France and one with punched decoration on the bow from grave 2922 from Krefeld-Gellep.⁸¹ One type of Late Roman belt also had a shoulder strap. For this there is evidence in a grave from Oudenburg.⁸² Although the shoulder strap buckles are normally rhomboid, a small buckle was found in grave 2991 from Krefeld-Gellep (Fig. 10).⁸³ Both Krefeld-Gellep graves

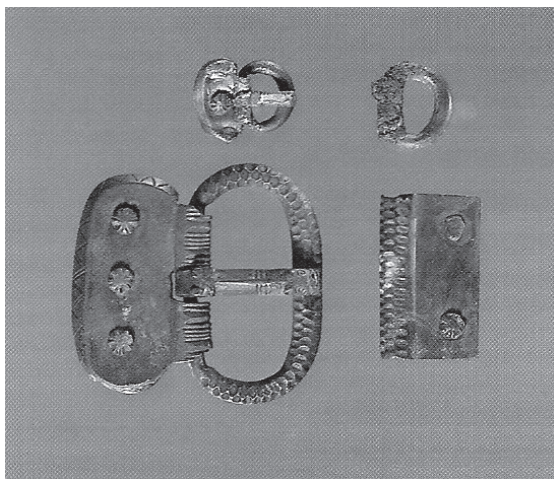


Fig. 9. Varpelev. Silver belt buckles (photo: The National Museum of Denmark/Kit Weiss).

77. Engelhardt 1877, 349-359; Lund Hansen 1987, 65, 122 note 13, 416; Lund Hansen 2006, 77-80.

78. See discussion above.

79. Ilkjær 1993, 373-374.

80. Bullinger 1969, figs. 4.8, 11.1 & pls. I, XIX.

81. Böhme 1974, pls. 130-131, map 19.37; Pirling 1989, 49, pls. 7.3-5.

82. Bullinger 1969, 60-61, fig. 47.3, pl. LXVIII, 3.

83. Bullinger 1969, fig. 49.1; Pirling 1989, 57-58, pls. 12.2-8.

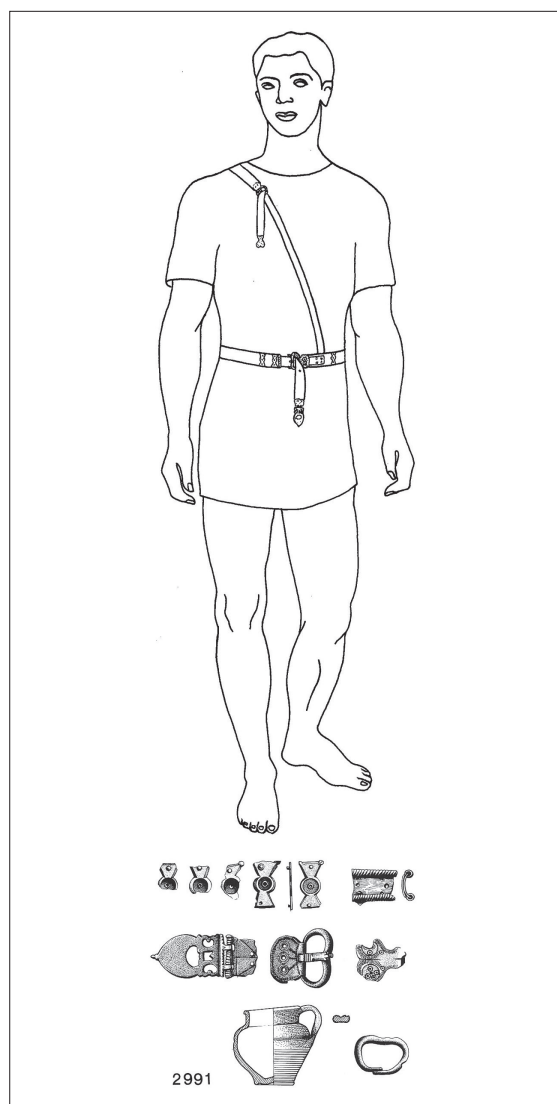


Fig. 10. Reconstruction of belt with shoulder strap from Krefeld-Gellep, grave 2991 (from Bullinger 1969, Abb. 49.1 & Pirling 1989, Pl. 12, 2991).

belong to the late Roman area of the cemetery, while the Monceau-le-Neuf grave contained a silver coin from the reign of Constantius II (AD 337-61).⁸⁴ Possibly this could explain the extra buckle in grave *a*. If this were the case, then the Varpelev warrior might have been equipped with a Late Roman style military belt.

84. Pirling 1979, Beilage 1; Werner 1949, 250-251.

85. Böhme 1972.

86. Böhme apparently mixes up the types; in the text she refers to Kuchenbuch's series, of which Series 4a and b correspond to Almgren VII Series 3. In the illustration text, however, the group has changed to Alm. VII, Ser. 4. Unfortunately this mistake is repeated by Beckmann,

AUXILIARII

The second group of material concerns the possible presence of Scandinavian mercenaries at the *limes*. As a case study for a Germanic presence, the Taunus *castella* have proven useful. The excavations at Saalburg and Zugmantel have both revealed interesting material, while the outcome of excavations at the fortlets situated between the two, Feldberg and Alteburg-Hefftrich, has been minimal. In 1972, A. Böhme examined the *fibulae* from Saalburg and Zugmantel.⁸⁵ The largest group was the crossbow *fibula* with a high needle holder, Almgren VII. Of this group, she identified 49, out of which 15 examples belong to the Series 3.⁸⁶ This type of *fibula* is distributed from the Lower Elbe area and north, with a specific concentration on the Danish islands (Fig. 11). They are, for instance, represented in the prominent graves at Skovgårde and Himlingøje.⁸⁷ A few have been found in the Rhine-Weser area. From Böhme's list of Almgren VII in a provincial Roman context, it is clear that although they are not extremely rare, there are only one or two examples found at each place, with the exception of Zugmantel (42), Saalburg (7) and Butzbach (8).⁸⁸ Interestingly, Butzbach is the next larger *castellum* east of Saalburg. From this we can deduce that



Fig. 11. Skovgårde. *Fibulae* Almgren VII (from Ethelberg *et al.* 2000, 45, fig. 34).

who refers to Alm. VII, Ser. 4 as equal to Kuchenbuch Ser. 4a-b. Beckmann 1995, 412; Böhme 1972, 33-35.

87. Lund Hansen *et al.* 1995, 154-157; Ethelberg 2000, 44-50.

88. Böhme 1972, 33, 65, Fundliste 31. Again there is a discrepancy, as she says, 41 from Zugmantel and 8 from Saalburg, while from the catalogue numbers in the find list the numbers appear to be 42 and 7.

whoever brought the *fibulae* were more or less placed within the same area of the *limes*. The Almgren VII types are dated to the end of the 2nd and the 3rd century AD.⁸⁹ In 1995, B. Beckmann presented an overview of Germanic objects at the Taunus *limes*. Here he recapitulated Böhme's results concerning the *fibulae*, producing a map based on these results (Fig. 12).⁹⁰ The map shows the spread of the three main groups of Germanic *fibulae*, Almgren V 141, Almgren V 101 and Almgren VII, as well as Series 3, the largest group of Almgren VII. What is apparent from this map is that the areas of origin are not in the immediate vicinity of the Roman border. It is rather the Lower Elbe area and north. Beckmann also examined the research on Germanic pottery in this area.⁹¹ In 1995, this subject had hardly been examined since von UsLAR's

work in the 1930s.⁹² From von UsLAR's work it was possible to conclude that these *castella* had had a Germanic presence for a long and unbroken duration of time, and that the Germanic pottery resembled that of the West Germanic area, i.e., the Rhine-Weser area.⁹³

In 2000, D. Walter published a dissertation on the Germanic pottery from the area between the River Main and the Taunus *limes*.⁹⁴ The definition of Germanic pottery is that it is made in a Germanic tradition, basically in the style used in the Rhine-Weser area, i.e., the pottery is generally locally made.⁹⁵ For Zugmantel, the conclusion based on the pottery is that Germanic settlers arrived during the reign of Commodus or later, most likely on the request of the Romans. Walter interpreted the settlement in relation to the keeping of livestock. This presence continued throughout the first third of the 3rd century AD.⁹⁶ With respect to Saalburg, the presence is more obscure. This could be due to the early excavation date of the site. The pottery is roughly and insecurely dated to the end of the 2nd and the 3rd century AD. The pottery possibly derived from a Romanised Germanic group coming from outside the Roman Empire.⁹⁷ In 1988, S. Sommer suggested that the *vicus* at Zugmantel had a "Germanic quarter" based on the find location of the Germanic pottery.⁹⁸ This suggestion was rejected by Walter, who pointed out that the Germanic pottery at both Zugmantel and Saalburg was found among Roman pottery, thus indicating a mixed habitat rather than a sort of ghetto.⁹⁹ Furthermore, the relation between the *terra sigillata* and the Germanic pottery was 3.1:1, indicating the presence of quite a few people of Germanic origin. For Saalburg, such a comparison is not possible, as the find situation is not entirely clear. Although the amount of Germanic pottery compared to Zugmantel is considerably lower (50 compared to 1,300 fragments), Saalburg has produced more *fibulae* and coins. This is probably partly due to

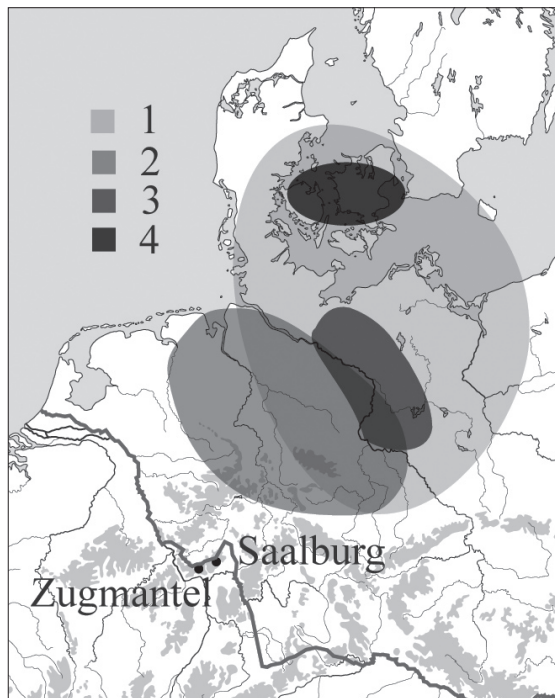


Fig. 12. Distribution map of Germanic *fibulae*. 1: Almgren VII. 2: Almgren V 141. 3: Almgren V 101. 4: Almgren VII, Series 3 (from Beckmann 1995, 411).

89. Böhme 1972, 35.

90. Beckmann 1995, 411-412.

91. Beckmann 1995, 410-411.

92. UsLAR 1934.

93. Beckmann 1995, 411; von UsLAR 1934, 96.

94. Walter 2000.

95. Walter 2000, 14, 197.

96. Walter 2000, 66-67, 70, 151-152.

97. Walter 2000, 66, 71, 140.

98. Sommer 1988, 607-609.

99. Walter 2004, 127-129, 131.

the excavators' concern for "museum worthy" objects, thus neglecting the "unspectacular and primitive" Germanic pottery.¹⁰⁰

Walter also looked at other Germanic remains from this area. One group of remains was the *fibulae*. She pointed out that the percentage of Germanic *fibulae* from the late 2nd and 3rd century AD is 10% for Zugmantel and 5% for Saalburg. As stated above, most Germanic types from this period originated in the Elbe area, while only Almgren VII, Kuchenbuch Series 4 had a concentration as far north as Denmark and southern Sweden. This type, she noted, has been found at several locations in the Rhine-Weser area. As the Elbe seems to be the primary area of origin for the main body of *fibulae*, she wondered if they came from a Germanic population different from the pottery, since only a few examples have been found in the Rhine-Weser area. To answer this question, she looked for support from E. Cosack and D. Rosenstock. They explained that the general lack of *fibula* finds was due to the burial customs. As no such items are found in graves, in contrast to the Elbe area, a different pattern emerges as metal objects are often rare finds at settlements. Walter's conclusion to this problem was, therefore, that the *fibula* distribution-pattern of the Rhine-Weser area would have been quite similar to that of the Elbe area, a conclusion she also found in the work of M. Kempa, who has examined the 'elbgermanischer Armbrustfibeln mit hohem Nadelhalter aus Rhein-Wesergermanischen Zusammenhängen'.¹⁰¹ Thus, Walter sees a geographical overlap of the two groups of material. Beckmann had another suggestion for the different geographical areas of origin. In his article, he described a number of interesting features. First, the Germanic evidence has shown us that movement over larger areas was done by individuals or smaller groups and not only by entire tribes. As the production of pottery was handled by women, they travelled as well. But whether

the limitation of pottery styles to that of the Rhine-Weser area meant that the women only came from that area, which is just north of the *limes*, Beckmann mentions the *Chatti* several times, is difficult to answer.¹⁰² Walter linked the find groups by assuming that a *fibula* pattern, which is undetectable in the present state of research, in one area, is more or less similar to the neighbouring area. That is a difficult argument to address. She also proposed the advent of a Germanic population in connection with a civil sphere, where they were invited to raise cattle for the Romans. Her reasoning was that the location of these *castella* served no other obvious purpose, such as trade or transport.¹⁰³ Others, like Beckmann and Sommer, have suggested that the newly arrived Germanic population were *Auxilarii* rather than cattle herders.¹⁰⁴ One way to explain the combination of Rhine-Weser women with Elbe men would be that Germanic mercenaries coming to serve the Romans found local Germanic women to marry.

But let us return to the southern Scandinavian aspect. Both Böhme and Beckmann mentioned this connection as a possibility. Walter, on the other hand, although she mentioned that Kuchenbuch 4 is also found in southern Scandinavia, stressed the fact that this type is found in the Rhine-Weser area. Another relevant point is that the material consists only of 15 examples, a very small amount upon which to build theories. But overall we know very little about mercenaries coming from *Barbaricum*. There are no complete auxiliary units composed of mercenaries from outside the Empire stationed anywhere. At Saalburg and Zugmantel, two cohorts were stationed in this period. At Saalburg, it was the *cohors II Raetorum civium Romanorum equitata* and at Zugmantel, a *numerus Treverorum* probably turning into the *cohors I Treverorum equitata* in AD 223. These units would nominally be c. 500 strong. In the last phase, the two units would be

100. Walter 2000, 49-50; 2004, 127.

101. Cosack 1979, 14-15; Kempa 1995, 104, n. 660; Rosenstock 1992, 196; Walter 2000, 54-56.

102. Beckmann 1995, 413.

103. Walter 2000, 66-67, 70.

104. Beckmann 1995, 413-414; Sommer 1988, 608. Sommer suggests this in relation to a new phase of Zugmantel, which he connects to Germanic pottery in the first half of the 2nd century AD, a date that Walter rejects. See Walter 2000, 152.

of equal size in theory. The size of the *castella*, however, were 3.2 and 2.1 hectares respectively for Saalburg and Zugmantel, the latter being the smallest cohort fort in *Germania Superior*.¹⁰⁵ Obviously, we have no way of knowing whether other units were attached as well or for instance whether a *centuria* or a few *contubernia* might have consisted of Germanic mercenaries. However, N. Austin and B. Rankov focused on two 3rd century potsherds found in the *vicus* of Zugmantel, one with the graffito “*EXPLO*” the other just with “*EX*”, which could indicate several names.¹⁰⁶ This, they suggested, indicates that an *exploratio* unit was stationed here at this time. The *exploratores* were special units with the task of seeking cross-border intelligence, i.e., they acted as scouts. They were initially developed in the Roman Germanic provinces by hiring locals.¹⁰⁷ These were small units, whose members were detached from other units. By their ethnic origin, Germanic warriors would be very well suited for the assignment of patrolling the native borderlands. Interestingly, such a unit, the *exploratio Halic(ensis) Alexandriana*, was billeted in the reign of Severus Alexander (AD 222-235) at the small *castellum* of Feldberg, one of the two situated between Zugmantel and Saalburg.¹⁰⁸

The chronological setting for both pottery and *fibulae* starts after the Marcomannic wars. As stated above, a particular connection between the Roman Empire and Zealand can be followed from the time of these wars. With this in mind, one scenario could be that an arrangement was made between the Romans and a group of Germanic warriors from Zealand. Instead of returning home after the war, for which they had signed up, they stayed for a period of time at certain *castella* in the Taunus region. The reason could be that the war had created an immediate shortage of Roman soldiers in certain units. Obviously, such an arrangement could have been made with any group of foreign mercenaries. If as an experiment, we transfer the percentage of *fibulae* to the number of men, i.e.,

10% for Zugmantel and 5% for Saalburg in this period, there would have been approximately 50 Germanic warriors stationed at Zugmantel and 25 at Saalburg given the nominal value of a cohort. This calculation presumes that all *fibulae* were worn by men, but in fact this type is predominantly found in female graves, for instance, at Skovgårde.¹⁰⁹ However, as a large part of the *fibula* finds from the war booty sacrifice at Thorsbjerg is also constituted by Almgreen VII *fibulae*, we cannot conclude that they were only worn by women based on the grave finds.¹¹⁰ Naturally it is impossible to come close to any absolute figures, but the fact is that there are Germanic elements in this period that have an area of origin covering most of the north-western part of *Germania* with a concentration both in the Lower Elbe region and on the Danish islands. Thus, for now, a possible presence in these regions cannot be disregarded. As findings of a large amount of *fibulae* from the *limes castella* are still unpublished, we may get a clearer picture of this issue in the future.

CONCLUSION

I have in the above attempted to show how a variety of different objects constitute a marker that could indicate a status of either *Auxilarii* or *foederati*. In the group of graves, Hedegård A 4103 is somewhat different for several reasons. There is the uniqueness of the *pugio*, as well as the modesty of the grave gifts compared to the other graves. Whereas all the other graves are presumed to belong to the highest social class, Hedegård must belong to a lower stratum, with no precious metals and only one Roman bronze vessel among the grave gifts. As mentioned, the *pugio* shows an affiliation with the Roman army in particular. Although a local prince, he might not have qualified for the position of Arminius and his relatives or Maroboduus. Maybe he and his men were attached to a Roman unit, where he might have taken

105. Oldenstein-Pferdehirt 1983, 338-342; Fabricius *et al.* 1937, 9, 36-41; 11, 70-75.

106. Austin & Rankov 1995, 192; Jacobi 1913, 81, 16, 19; pls. XVI, 16, 19.

107. Austin & Rankov 1995, 189-195; Speidel 1983, 63-78.

108. CIL XIII 7495; Austin & Rankov 1995, 192 & pl. 9.

109. Ethelberg 2000, 44-45.

110. Raddatz 1957, 108-111.

on a prominent position in a special unit functioning as scouts like the later *exploratores*. The fact is that the cemetery at Hedegård contained an unusually high percentage of weapon graves from the last period of the pre-Roman Iron Age and the Early Iron Age, i.e., the transition around the birth of Christ (25% compared to an average of 7-8%). Among the finds were many La Tène swords and a chain mail of a Gallo-Roman type. Some of the swords were not locally made and the sheath of one was made in *opus interrabile*, a type that had parallels in *Pannonia*.¹¹¹ Depending on how one judges the significance of weapon graves, this phenomenon may have been caused by an awareness of the warrior identity in this area due to the Roman conquests of *Gallia* and *Germania*.¹¹² However, it is hard to say if the Romans would have had this kind of impact already in the last century BC. With this in mind, the question is whether Hedegård should be classified as belonging to the section on *auxilarii* rather than the one on *foederati*.

A feature common to the earlier rich graves from Hoby and Brokær is that they are both the richest graves in the Danish area of their time. This in itself makes them interesting. However, their primary features concerning military-political relations with the Romans are the 'Silius'-inscription and the ring-pommel sword, rather than their wealth.

The weakest link is the Juellinge grave. The suggestion that this grave represents a relation is solely based on the presence of two unique glass bowls. Of course it is impossible to say whether they do have such significance or not. Nevertheless, this is a suggestion that direct contact in this area would most likely indicate a diplomatic and hence a military-political relation rather than a mere trade relation. This, of course, touches on the question of the nature of contacts, at least in the first centuries AD. Traditionally, contact is explained in three ways: booty, trade or diplomacy. The vaguest of these is booty. Firm evidence is seen for in-

stance in the southern Scandinavian war booty sacrifices or in the hoard finds in the Upper Rhine from the 3rd century AD.¹¹³ Otherwise, it often has a sort of joker position, something that can almost always be mentioned as an alternative. The last two explanations are mostly seen as alternatives to each other, but probably one was often followed by the other. This could have been a result of peace negotiations, e.g., during the Marcomannic wars.¹¹⁴ The special trade conditions for the *Hermunduri*, which allowed them access even to the provincial capital *Augusta Vindelicum* (Augsburg), mentioned by Tacitus might also be seen in this light.¹¹⁵ Another possibility is that they developed along side each other.

At Himlingøje, the chronological coincidence of the founding graves and the Marcomannic wars and the monopoly that this family appears to hold on Roman goods for the next many years, support the hypothesis that such relations existed at the beginning of the 3rd century AD.¹¹⁶ This is the equivalent period for which the same geographical area is related to the *limes*. Though the *fibulae* cannot be linked directly to a military sphere, or to males alone for that matter, the possibility of a southern Scandinavian presence is there. An interesting fact is that the garrison shift at Zugmantel in AD 223 from a *numerus* unit to a *cohors* coincides with the approximate time when the Germanic pottery disappears again.¹¹⁷ Could this be an indication that the aforementioned (possibly partly Germanic) *exploratores* had become obsolete?

The later graves of Hågerup and Varpelev are special, because they both appear to have more markers than do the previous graves. It is particularly intriguing that Hågerup so resembles graves from the later Haßleben-Leuna horizon. A few considerations concern one of the markers in Hågerup, the Roman gold finger ring. As explained, this particular object had a certain meaning inside the Roman Empire as either indicating Roman citizenship or as the token of a

111. Madsen 1999, 62-63, 83-86; Watt 2003, 186.

112. Wells 1999, 119-121, 238-239.

113. Jørgensen *et al.* 2003; e.g., Künzl 1993.

114. Cassius Dio 71.15.

115. Tacitus *Germania* 41.

116. Beckmann 1995, 412; Jørgensen 2001, 13; Lund Hansen *et al.* 1995, 385-387; Storgaard 2001, 102-103, 106.

117. Baatz 1989d, 502.

personal or official friendship. From the literary sources we could highlight a couple of examples where a gold ring could have played a part, although it is not mentioned. Some time during the reign of Nero (AD 54-68), the *Frisii* began to occupy vacated land reserved for army use. This was instigated by Verritus and Malorix, who ruled the *Frisii*, '*in quantum Germani regnantur*', '*in as much as Germani could be ruled*', as Tacitus put it. While threatening to remove the *Frisii* with force, the governor, L. Duvius Avitus, suggested they ask Nero for more land. Therefore, they went to Rome to meet the Emperor. Both were sent home again with brand new Roman citizenship, but without any promise of land.¹¹⁸ Cassius Dio relates that in the beginning of the AD 90s, Masyos, king of the *Semnones*, and Ganna, the prophetess Veleda's successor, visited the Emperor Domitian in Rome. After an honourable reception they went home.¹¹⁹ These brief notes on the diplomatic encounters of the Emperor tell us little, but the visitors would have been received routinely with proper protocol, which is all implicit in the word *τιμῆς*, '*with honours*'. In fact, Tacitus does convey that a visit to the magnificent theatre of Pompeius was among the things '*quae barbaris ostentantur*', '*which were shown to barbarians*'. All of these representatives, with the possible exception of Ganna, a woman, may have received a ring as a token of the Emperor's patronship. However, not only the Hågerup grave contained a ring. Both Hoby and Brokær contained a plain gold finger ring of what C. Beckmann calls the wedding ring type.¹²⁰ This type is used both in Roman and Germanic cir-

cles.¹²¹ This type, when found in a Germanic context, would be considered of Germanic origin, and I shall not postulate otherwise here, but some could in fact have been Roman. There was no gold ring in Varpelev grave *a*. In Varpelev grave *a* (alfa), on the other hand, one of Beckmann type 17b was found. This ring had a blue gem, although it was not engraved. Grave *a* is contemporary with grave *a*, and contained a female and a large amount of gold jewellery among other things. In this part of the cemetery only these two graves had been so richly furnished.¹²² Although one should be cautious with such suggestions, I will risk proposing a scenario in which we interpret the two deceased as husband and wife. This type of ring probably has an origin in the Pannonian region, as determined by K. Andersson.¹²³ If it was a gift from a Roman, it is my impression that it would have been given to a man as a token of friendship from one head of a household to another, whether this household was a family or a tribe. However, once the Roman objects enter *Barbaricum* their meaning or symbolic value may change. Therefore, the husband could have given it to his wife later. Another possibility is that she got it after his death. Considering the grave goods of Roman origin from grave *a*, and the combined value of the two graves including local 'insignia' such as a snake's head neck and finger ring, a gilt swastika *fibula* with an amber 'rosette', as well as three other finger rings of gold and two of silver, two gold pins, an *aureus*, and a belt with silver buckles, I believe that this scenario need not be considered a complete fantasy.

118. Tacitus *Annales* 13.14.

119. Cassius Dio 67.5.3.

120. Beckmann 1969, 26-30, pls. 7-8.

121. Beckmann 1969, 29-30; Henkel 1913, 1, pl. 1.

122. Engelhardt 1877, 349-351, 366-367; Lund Hansen 2006, 78.

123. Andersson 1985, 135-136.

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A collection of ancient Greek and Roman artifacts, including a bronze tripod stand, a large bronze bowl, a bronze vase, a bronze pot, a bronze jug, a bronze tray, a bronze cup, a silver bowl, a silver bowl, and various small silver and bronze objects.

Pl. III. The name “Silius” inscribed on the bottom of one of the Hobby cups (from Friis Johansen 1923, 130/ photo: Lisbeth Imer).



Pl. IV. Hedegård grave A 4103. Pugio of the Dunaföld-var type (photo: Museum Sønderjylland/Steen Henriksen).



Pl. V. Himlingøje, grave 1828. Silver beaker with gilt ornamented band (photo: The National Museum of Denmark/Lennart Larsen).



Pl. VI. Hågerup. Roman ring with sigillum (photo: The National Museum of Denmark/John Lee).



Pl. VII. Varpelev. Silver and glass kantharos (photo: The National Museum of Denmark/Lennart Larsen).